United Nations S/2000/486

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 May 2000
English
Original: French

Letter dated 23 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention a statement on the Peace Implementation Conference issued on 22 May 2000 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a Security Council document.

(*Signed*) António **Monteiro**
Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations

00-45063 (E) 250500 250500

Annex to the letter dated 23 May 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the Peace Implementation Conference issued on 22 May 2000 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

In view of the Ministerial meeting of the Peace Implementation Conference for Bosnia and Herzegovina, taking place on 23 and 24 May 2000, the European Union recalled its full commitment to the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this regard, it commended the remarkable work accomplished in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the High Representative and his staff, and reiterated its entire support to their action.

The European Union took note that approaching the fifth year after Dayton substantial progress had been made. The security situation had stabilized. Major reconstruction had been completed. Minority returns were accelerating. The Brcko District was established and functioning. Successive elections had initiated a trend towards growing political pluralism. Bosnia and Herzegovina was accepted as a nation State. There was a new mood across Bosnia and Herzegovina as we move into the new millennium. The people of Croatia had shown the way by voting for peace, freedom and justice. There was a movement towards true "ownership" by the people and by civil society, with democratic freedom and economic transparency finally taking root.

However, much more could have been achieved: political obstruction and the pursuit of narrow ethnic agendas by some, was holding the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina back from reaping the full economic and democratic benefits the Dayton/Paris Accords held out to them. The European Union supports the High Representative in the use of his full powers to ensure implementation of the Peace Accords, including the removal of those obstructing economic reforms.

The programme presented, if agreed to by the Conference, would empower the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to seize the opportunities open to those in a modern European State, and to choose the path of prosperity and democratic freedoms.

Implementing the Dayton/Paris Accords meant:

- Accelerating economic reform to avoid economic collapse. Breaking the stranglehold of political parties on economic and commercial life. Simplifying regulations to free Bosnia and Herzegovina's entrepreneurs. Ensuring that the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina have the telecommunications, power and banking services they need, and can join the new generation of internet technology;
- Developing effective and democratic state institutions based on a professional civil service, and creating state-level regulatory bodies to implement the provisions under the Dayton Constitution in order for Bosnia and Herzegovina to serve the interest of its own people;

- Fighting corruption and organized crime, as well as increasing transparency and accountability, including breaking the links between political parties and business;

- Establishing an independent and impartial judiciary that will ensure the rule of law;

- Refugees returning to their homes in an accelerated and self-sustaining process;

- Bringing persons indicted for war crimes who are still at large to justice;

- Completing the transformation of media and public broadcasting and ensuring that the media are allowed to operate without intimidation and political interference;

- Reducing military expenditure and embarking on fundamental reconstructing of the Entity Armed Forces based on the financial viability and defence needs of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

- Playing a positive role in the Stability Pact process.

Implementing the Dayton/Paris Accords, through political, social and economic reforms, would pave the way for the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina to join the other States of south-eastern Europe in the European Union Stabilization and Association process.